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November 9, 2011

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM:  Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **USE OF SOLE SOURCE AGREEMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THE
MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT SERVICES**

This is to notify you of the intent of the Department of Public Health (DPH) to enter into sole source agreements with Behavioral Health Services, Inc. (BHS), Prototypes, and Tarzana Treatment Center (TTC) to continue providing medication-assisted treatment (MAT) services.

Background

In March 2010, the Department of Public Health (DPH) Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) began a demonstration project to evaluate the use of MAT (specifically Vivitrol) services for clients seeking treatment at SAPC-contracted agencies for substance use disorders (SUD). Vivitrol has been used in the private sector and by those with sufficient insurance coverage for several years; however, due to the relatively high cost of Vivitrol (\$847 per dose) compared with other medications currently being used to treat addictions, it has not been affordable for most of the clients served by SAPC-contracted agencies.

The scope of the project included the collection and analysis of information regarding alcohol use days, side effects, medication-protocol adherence, and counselor attitudes to evaluate the best use of Vivitrol and determine the best approaches for implementing Vivitrol to help improve client outcomes. The three agencies were selected to act as "medication hubs" to provide MAT services to their clients and to those enrolled at other treatment agencies, including DPH's Antelope Valley Rehabilitation Centers (AVRC). DPH's medication dispensing protocol required that each of the three agencies provide counseling, medication management, and primary care services to all clients receiving MAT services.

Currently, the University of California, Los Angeles' Integrated Substance Abuse Programs (UCLA-ISAP) is completing an evaluation of MAT. According to the preliminary findings, the following outcomes have been resulted: engagement in treatment (i.e., a length of stay of at least 30 days); decreases in alcohol use; reduction in alcohol cravings; and minimal side effects. These findings indicate that the use of Vivitrol is helpful in retaining clients in treatment and assisting clients in significantly reducing their alcohol use. Although MAT is more costly than other interventions, it should be noted that the use of medications can lead to increased retention which has shown to decrease healthcare costs.

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Justification for Use of Sole Source Contracting

In order to continue MAT services, DPH intends to enter into sole source agreements with BHS, Prototypes, and TTC. Their specialized knowledge and experience in medication coordination, case management, and injection, medical, and counselor follow-up are necessary to ensure the MAT protocol is strictly followed. In addition, these agencies have purchasing authority with a pharmaceutical company (to make direct and reduced rate purchases), as well as the infrastructure to store and maintain a medicine inventory. Further, each of the three agencies either operates its own health center or has an existing agreement with a health center, and as such, can directly provide the medication to eligible participants in the future.

Total funding for each sole source agreement for the period of July 1, 2011 through June 20, 2014 is as follows: BHS-\$847,953, Prototypes-\$847,953, and TTC-\$1,695,907. Since the purchase of medications used for AVRC clients are made through TTC, funding for TTC is budgeted higher than its counterparts.

Approval of the recommended actions, which is tentatively scheduled for November 29, 2011 Board meeting, will allow DPH to continue to provide MAT services to eligible Los Angeles County residents.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

JEF:amh

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors